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Finland to join European level social dialogue for central government

The Finnish Minister of Finance Jutta Urpilainen expressed her desire to have Finland participate in the formal European level social dialogue between the employees and employers in the central government sector. Urpilainen made the announcement in a seminar on the future of the European Union and EMU held by the central organisations of the Finnish trade unions on May 28, 2013. Urpilainen raised the issue in the context of discussing the European labour market model and the necessity to develop social Europe. She stated that it is important for Finland to participate in the social dialogue and was hopeful about the positive outcome that participating in the dialogue will induce.

JHL and Pardia, the Finnish trade unions representing the central government sector, are pleased about the Minister’s statement.

– We have presented this issue to the employer party on several occasions ever since 2009, when the establishment of the formal social dialogue was prepared. This is great news and more than welcome, noted Jarkko Eloranta, the President of The Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors JHL.

The Work Programme of the Social Dialogue Committee for 2012–2013 includes current themes, some of which stem from the decisions of the European Commission. The same themes are current in Finland, too.

Important topics in the social dialogue are the image of the central government as an attractive employer, reorganisations, anticipation of change and gender equality in pay. These issues have multiple effects on the situation of employees. Examples of issues with concrete affects on the entire public sector and the position and the terms of employment of public sector employees are the financial crisis and the financial coordination by the European Union.

– It is important that Finland is fully committed to and involved in dealing with these issues between European employers and trade union organisations. It is also vital that influencing these issues is carried out in cooperation, states Antti Palola, the President of The Federation of Salaried Employees Pardia and a member of the Social Dialogue Committee.

The first European framework agreement between 11 central government employers participating in the social dialogue and the trade union federations of the 27 EU member states was signed in December 2012. The agreement was made for quality service in central government administrations.

The social dialogue for the central government sector between the employers and trade unions of the EU member states was formalised in 2010 with 11 member states participating and two member states observing the dialogue. Nordic employers have not been participating in the formal social dialogue for the central government sector.

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